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ABSTRACT

An ethnographic investigation was conducted for the purpose of elucidating the impact of cultural contexts on teachers' values and classroom practices. Data were collected in a classroom in a Head Start center located in a small, economically depressed town in rural, central Pennsylvania. The study focused on the head teacher, the assistant teacher, and the special programs tutor, all of whom were white women from the surrounding community who had varying amounts of Head Start training, but no college degrees. Domains of central interest were the uses of time and space, activities and materials, interactions between teachers and children, and connections between home and school. Questions guiding the study were: (1) What values are promoted by teachers in the center? (2) How are time, space, materials, activities, and teacher-child interactions used to support these values? (3) Is an orientation toward either self-direction or conformity toward the group evident? (4) Why do the teachers feel it is important to promote certain values? (5) Do the social milieus of the teachers play a role in determining the values that are promoted? Concluding discussion concerns implications of the findings. Appended are the researcher's reflections on herself, life histories of the teachers, and a questionnaire for use in studying teachers' social milieus. (RH)

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TEACHER VALUES AND CLASSROOM CULTURE: TEACHING AND LEARNING IN A RURAL, WHITE HEAD START PROGRAM

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TEACHER VALUES AND CLASSROOM CULTURE: TEACHING AND LEARNING IN A RURAL, WHITE HEAD START PROGRAM

Introduction

This paper will share some insights gained from a case study I did for my dissertation. As the title indicates, the focus was on one classroom in a rural center where all the teachers and all but one of the children were white. My intention is to explain why I did the study, what I found, and the issues I'm still struggling with, especially my emerging concerns about unquestioned support for "developmentally appropriate practice."

The study I will describe is an extension of Lubeck's 1985 comparison of a black Head Start center and a white, middle-class preschool focusing on school differences in enculturation (Sandbox Society). Her study focused on the race of the the teachers as the primary determinant of teacher values and hence their classroom practices. Lubeck noted that social class may also have had an impact on teachers' values (the black teachers in her study were of a lower SES than the white teachers), but did not consider this important variable in her analysis.

Like Lubeck, I used the constructs of time, space, activities and materials, and teacher-child interactions to "tease out" patterns in the way classroom life was organized. To extend her work and address the race and class confounds therein, I focused on the impact of social class on teacher values: the teachers in Middle County II were all white and of working class backgrounds. In addition to the four domains mentioned, I found it was necessary to give attention to teacher interactions with parents because of the crucial role assigned to school-family connections in Head Start programming. I hope you will be able to "get a feel for" the teachers, their values, and the classroom culture, despite the difficulty in condensing a long-term descriptive

study into a brief paper.

A consistent theme in the literature on schooling is that teachers appear to construct educational environments that are consonant with their life orientations (e.g., Lubeck, 1985; Grant & Sleeter, 1986). Because teachers interpret curriculum prescriptions and other programmatic emphases in different ways due to their implicit beliefs, theory does not automatically transfer to practice. Deep-seated cultural beliefs influence how teachers perceive classroom situations and interpret the educational setting. Included in teacher beliefs is a set of values about what teachers and children ought to do in school settings and what children ought to learn (Spodek, 1988a).

Carew and Lightfoot (1979) suggest that the values transmitted in a classroom depend on teacher value orientation which in turn is determined by social class identification. In support of this idea, Heath, in her Ways with Words (1983), found that the teachers she studied often merely reproduced the values of their, typically majority, culture and did not consider how their unexamined assumptions about "the world as it is" might be affecting children from different cultures. It seems likely that social class (in addition to race and gender) influence teacher expectations of student performance. Grant and Sleeter (1986) found that "the community was an important determinant of how they [teachers] taught in that it suggested to them there was a limit to how much students could be expected to learn..." (p. 218).

With the above in mind, I will provide a brief overview of Project Head Start to frame the study and the paper. Head Start began in 1965 as one of the federal government's War on Poverty programs. An integral part of Head Start programming was focused on family involvement which gave parents a good deal of decision-making power. Home-school connections were just one part of the original intent of Head Start to serve as an agent of social change through community control over

programs. Over time, however, as the activism of the 1960s waned, parental decision making became limited to (in most settings) serving on advisory boards. It then became easier to focus on family deficiencies rather than on social inequities and empowerment of the disenfranchised and Head Start became "a more purely remedial program" (Wrigley 1989, p. 429).

In addition to the ideology of family deficiency, Head Start has also left a legacy of class-based programming. While officially Head Start was to serve diverse populations, in practice centers have tended to serve homogeneous groups based on income, location, and parental biases, preventing any real integration of facilities. Social class homogeneity, for example, has continued to plague the program over the course of its history. The differences between education/care for the poor and education/care for middle- and upper-class children have been seen not only in the emphasis on providing help in child rearing to poor families and the attendant narrow goals, but also in the people who have been hired to staff the programs.

Given eligibility guidelines based on family income, child stratification is not surprising; often overlooked is the stratification that exists for staff. Teachers of older children and those in preschool programs serving the middle and upper class typically have four-year degrees whereas Head Start programs are staffed largely with paraprofessionals, typically low-income women from the community with a CDA (Child Development Associate) certificate. The result is differentiation along class lines of not only those who receive care but those who provide it, a situation which will be further discussed in a few moments.

This fall, on the 25th anniversary of its inception, Head Start published the results of a Silver Ribbon Panel investigation. There were many positive findings associated with the program, but some challenges and recommendations for

improvement were also noted. In order to be effective in the future, Head Start must address (to list just a few concerns): issues of staff quality and compensation; the expansion of programming to younger children, all eligible children -- currently only 20% of eligible families are served, and children of working parents; developmentally and culturally responsive programming; parents as decision makers within a community setting; and the pressing need for collaboration with other E. C. programs and research/dissemination (Lombardi, 1990). Of especial interest here is the research recommendation addressing the economic integration of Head Start eligible and middle-class children.

Methodology

This study was undertaken in an attempt to elucidate the impact of cultural contexts on teachers' values and classroom practices. It was therefore vital to focus on the contexts in which the teachers lived and taught, so a research methodology which was holistic and considered the actors behaviors in context was necessary; thus, ethnography. The questions guiding the study were the following:

1) What values are promoted by the teachers in the center?

2) How are time, space, materials and activities, and teacher-child interactions utilized to support these values?

3) Is an orientation toward either self-direction or conformity toward the group evident?

4) Why do the teachers feel it is important to promote certain values?

5) Does the "social milieu" of the teachers (as determined by a "social milieu" questionnaire) play a role in determining the values promoted?

Data were collected from October, 1989 through February, 1990 in one classroom of a Head Start center located in a small, economically depressed town in

rural central Pennsylvania. I functioned as a participant observer, taking notes, recording schedules, drawing maps and flow chats, and talking over my observations and emerging understandings at the beginning and end of the day with the three classroom teachers. Additionally, I took pictures inside and out, collected site documents (e.g., lesson plans, parent information, High/Scope and Head Start materials), interviewed the teachers (during which time they responded to Winetsky's 1978 Educational Activities Index), and asked them to write up life histories and to complete a brief "social milieu" questionnaire. (These last two are attached.) I also accompanied teachers to one in-service day and on home visits twice.

Critical validity was of particular concern due to the potentially sensitive nature of the study. I tried my best to self-monitor and use reflective accounting throughout, and clarified personal background, biases, and knowledge (information attached) which may have had an impact on either what data was collected or how it was interpreted. However, I was not entirely successful in remaining an interpreter rather than an evaluator if comments from readers regarding my obvious but unstated preference for "mainstream" E.C.E. practice are any indication. Again, I will bring this up later as my initial inability to see past my experiences has become the focus of my struggle and my revisions.

The setting

The classroom upon which the study focused, here called Middle County II, was part of a three-county Head Start organization which operated a total of 11 classes. In a one-story, colorfully painted building, classes were held for four hours every Monday and Tuesday. I selected the site because of my familiarity with the program and several of the teachers. Fortunately, both teachers and administrators were receptive to participant-observer presence for the length of time required and were cooperative

throughout. Because I wanted to focus on low-income white families and teachers, it was also crucial that the site serve and be staffed with this population. As noted earlier, this was the case for the 17 children and 3 teachers in Middle County II.

The subjects

My study focused on the head teacher, the assistant teacher, and the Special Programs tutor who worked in the Middle County II classroom. All were white women from the surrounding community, and, although none had college degrees, each had varying amounts of Head Start "training." The names of all three teachers have been changed.

Lisa, the head teacher, was the most "middle class" in terms of educational background and aspirations, as well as, and perhaps related to, her social milieu. Her practice also was most consistent with what has been labeled "developmentally appropriate practice" (DAP) as defined and described by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). [Very briefly, this philosophy is child-centered and assumes that what children learn casually and naturally from living their lives and playing throughout the day is valuable, natural learning].

Tami, the assistant teacher, supported the concept of DAP but contended that the children needed more direct instruction in order to succeed in the kindergartens they would be attending. Connie, the Special Needs Tutor, also had some philosophical and practical differences with Lisa. her role was to address the deficits of the children in each classroom identified as having special needs. She also was an advocate for DAP but, like Tami, her practice often leaned toward "skill drill" on pre-academics.

Results

After much time spent trying to characterize the Middle County II classroom as either oriented toward the group or toward the individual (as Lubeck was able to), I came to the conclusion that the program provided may have been trying to "cover all the bases." That is, it reflected both the teachers' knowledge of and desire to use "mainstream" E.C.E. practice (in this case, the High/Scope curriculum), as well as reflecting a perceived need to remedy the "deprived" home environments and ready the children for an academic kindergarten. Therefore, within the very short time they had with the children, the teachers tried to provide a fairly even balance of child-initiated, open-ended, experiential activities (as in DAP) with teacher-directed, product-oriented, fairly structured activities of an academic nature. Of special note was the teachers' insistence on a preference for the former, contrasted with the amount of the latter practiced. The following sections summarize findings from each of the four domains upon which I focused.

The use of time

In the Middle County II classroom, the amounts of group time and individual time were approximately equal. Because of this usage of time as well as my conversations with the teachers, I came to believe the teachers felt a need to provide, in equal amounts, opportunities for both child-initiated activities as well the direct instruction in the academics it was felt the children would need in school. Although combining DAP (which encourages individual exploration of the environment) with a "skill and drill" academic focus is not atypical, Middle County II is perhaps unusual in two ways.

First, the almost exactly even split of time between the two kinds of programming is in contrast to many early childhood settings where one programmatic

orientation predominates, and second, the teachers all stated a clear preference for DAP (in response to the Educational Activities Index and during their interviews) in opposition to the mixture of models seen in their practice.

The use of space

Preschool classrooms are set up to maximize the opportunities for the kinds of learning experiences the teachers think children ought to have. Despite the commonalities seen between many early childhood settings, differences regarding form and function are often evident and indicative of teacher (or program) value orientation. My findings regarding the use of space in Middle County II supported the notion beginning to emerge after studying the use of time: the teachers were attempting to balance a focus on individual needs with a group focus. There were times when the children could move freely through the space, most notably during Free Play, individualizing the curriculum as it were. At other times, especially morning circle and small group times, the children were expected to share their space with the others, as a member of the group. During the latter times, the children were gathered to receive the kinds of knowledge that reside with adults, usually the academic and social skills the children were thought to need for school success.

Activities and materials used

Just as how space and time are utilized indicates the ends that are valued, so too does the organization and utilization of materials in a given setting. In Middle County II, the curriculum reflected both a "mainstream," linear concept of growth and development and a traditional conception of what children need to know. Within the course of the four-hour day, the children went from a very structured large group time where desired responses were praised, to a small group time where specified activities were prepared based on the group's needs as defined by the teachers, to

free play times where differentiation was the rule and freedom of expression was encouraged.

Activities were somewhat compartmentalized as the short day was broken into segments designed to address the many areas of concern. Most daily routines were the same from one center day to the next and there was very little deviation from the schedule, although occasional changes did occur. The children (for the most part) did what they were expected to do within each time frame and, although there was a great deal of freedom during free play times, during group times the choices were much more limited.

The use of the Child Assessment Record (CAR), High/Scope's assessment tool, for activity planning is one example of the focus on what were perceived as curriculum "essentials." The CAR is intended to be used to assess whether certain age-appropriate skills within the broadly defined Key Experiences (e.g., seriation; numbers) were attained. However, rather than using the Key Experiences as encompassing areas within which to plan activities, they were used as themes to be taught didactically. This usage suggests teacher practice to have been more consistent with an "academic" model than was acknowledged.

The following example may help to clarify how materials and activities, typically used in an open-ended fashion, were used to focus the children on the theme of the month, in this case, numbers.

> Connie to child: "You have THREE piles. ONE big pizza, I see that." Lisa says as she works with her playdough alongside the children: "I have FOUR cookies." Tami asks a child, "How many did you make for me?" He replies, "Two." She then asks him, "Can you make THREE of them?" Lisa asks another child about a fire near his house: "How many

trucks came?" and repeats his response with emphasis: "TWO big trucks came." Lisa continued: "What did you make? A pizza? How many pepperoni did you put on it? You made pancakes? You made TWO pancakes." "Randy, you have ONE big ball, don't you?" "How many legs does that spider have?" "Look how many kids! I, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8...That was a lot of people wasn't it? How many people are at our table?"

This particular episode continued and was repeated in various forms throughout the day and month. Although transformative materials such as playdough and fingerpaint were often available, the emphasis on the teacher's agenda, that is, the concept of the month, often precluded child-initiated interaction with and exploration of materials. Thus, although the stated philosophical orientation toward individualization were borne out in some respects, at the same time children spent much time in teacher-defined groups and were expected to conform to the group in many ways.

Throughout the time I spent in Middle County II, I noted the amount of time spent specifically on cognitive and social skills. When I asked the teachers about this they concurred with my observation and said that with the limited time they had, these were the areas upon which they had to focus. There was a corresponding lack of time spent on physical, sensory, and creative art and music activities. Although the children usually had an outdoor play time, if they were not able to go out for some reason, indoor large motor activities did not always replace this time. There were both art and music times but in both cases there was a desired end product rather than an invitation to interact creatively with the materials. This "product over process" focus may also have reflected lack of time or may have been a reflection of the perception that because the children were "disadvantaged" they needed prescribed activities or both.

Teacher-child Interactions

The process of being incorporated into an on-going tradition or culture is mediated by, among other things, the nature of adult-child interactions. In Middle County II there were two contrasting styles of interaction similar to the dichotomies seen in usage of space, time, and materials. Teachers and children had frequent and warm interactions and teachers said one of their primary roles was facilitating learning through questioning and commenting. At the same time, teachers were often very directive and used low-level language when they wanted to emphasize certain concepts or socialize children to the group. We saw an example of the strong focus on concepts earlier; socialization to the group was evident by the number of times I recorded questions such as "Is that what we're doing now?", "What is everyone doing?", and the like.

It seems likely that there are parallels between what the teachers have experienced in their lives (and believe the children will likewise experience) and teacher classroom practices. The teachers in Middle County II are in the difficult position of both trying to prepare children for "mainstream" success (which takes for granted notions such as individualism, choice, independence, and growth) as well as trying to remediate perceived inadequacies of the children's home environments. Further, they may have learned that children in their community are most likely to grow up and get jobs that require compliance and conformity more than the ability to deal with and solve complex problems.

However, personal theories of what was needed for successful acculturation differed between the three teachers and consequently, much of their classroom practice was affected. According to her responses on the "social milieu" form, Lisa, the head teacher, had the most education and the highest standard of living of the three

teachers, and came from a family that valued education highly. She also had further aspirations for her education and career. In contrast, through my conversations with them as well as their responses to the "social milieu" form, it was evident that Tami and Connie were from environments where a large amount of education was not so highly valued. Further, both expressed contentment with their present positions, and in Connie's case, appreciative surprise.

The differences I noted between the teachers in terms of the activities they preferred, their need for structure, and their interactions with the children may well be related to their view of how the world is. From my observations, Lisa preferred open-ended and problem-solving activities, materials, and questions more so than either Tami or Connie. And, although all three teachers were supportive of the children and gave lots of praise, Lisa was most likely to accept and clarify children's responses. Tami tended to be directive with the children, did not converse much with them, and told me that she thought the program needed more structure so that the children would be ready for public school. Connie, perhaps in part due to the nature of her role as the Special Needs Tutor, notably focused on basic academic skills and concepts with children in terms of her interactions and activities.

Home-school Connections

The findings presented are linked to how the Middle County II teachers viewed the Head Start program and how they viewed the parents who were the program clients. The notion of the children's home environments as being "deprived" and the children as being "disadvantaged" has been alluded to. All the teachers with whom I talked said that although they sometimes got discouraged thinking about the home situations of the children, they believed that by working with the parents they might be able to help them learn to become better parents and teachers of their children.

However, from my observations of and conversations with the teachers, it was evident that the parents were seen as in need of intervention and direction from the Head Start staff. The following excerpts from teacher interviews should help to explicate their feelings about the families with whom they worked.

> Lisa: "...as far as the parent, I'm hoping that there's a bond between the parent and the child. And I know sometimes that's impossible, but I'm hoping that they've had enough good, positive experiences through the center that will carry over."
>
> Tami: "We work with the parents to give them the teaching skills that they can learn that they are the child's teacher. They can come in and volunteer anytime they want to. They don't do it, but they can."
>
> Connie (re home visits): "If the parent is not there watching what I'm doing...then before I leave I sit down with the parent and go over what I've done, where the child's at, what we've gained, what we need to work on. Then the parent signs a paper and they might want to carry on what I already started there."

Summary and Conclusions

Implications for Practice

One finding with implications for staff development relates to the observed differences between the teachers in the setting. Teachers could not be "generically" grouped as white, working-class females with similar backgrounds, similar values, and hence similar beliefs about practice. The varying social milieus of the teachers seem to have been important to their conceptions of the skills, knowledge, and values they believed ought to be transmitted to the children in their charge. At first, I had the mistaken notion that

the teachers were all from very similar backgrounds because they had all been born and raised in the same area and so I would be able to generalize about social class, but I found that living situations, education, and career aspirations varied widely, leading to variation in values and practices.

Job roles may have likewise impacted on teachers' philosophies and practices as the teachers were at different levels of "professional socialization." The head teacher, for example, had more responsibility for planning and more experience working with young children. These factors may have influenced how she felt about the suggested curricular model and also increased her exposure to DAP.

Teacher personalities may play a more important role in how teachers interact with children than has been widely documented. As I observed and talked with the three teachers, I became increasingly convinced that personality was linked to how the teachers responded to the children. The head teacher, Lisa, was a talkative, outgoing person while the assistant, Tami, was more reticent and direct, a no-nonsense kind of person. (For example, Lisa was more than willing to share information with me while Tami, although she knew me better, was unwilling to fill out the social milieu form). Although there is not one cluster of personality traits that make a person a better preschool teacher, the head teacher may have been perceived as more conversant, more reinforcing, and more sensitive and responsive to children. Thus what at first blush might seem to be philosophical differences may be instead, or also, a result of teacher personality.

Implications for Policy

As most educators know, parents and teachers are sometimes at odds with respect to schooling, and the parents, especially if they are poor or minority, may suffer due to the asymmetry of school-home relations (Smrekar, 1989). The findings of the present study indicate that this may well be the case in the Middle County II Head Start program. Although I was told by staff that parents were equal partners in the program, what I observed indicated that locus of control resided primarily with the professionals, not the parents. This kind of situation may not be in the best interests of children or families as it has been argued that high quality programs are characterized by collaborative, equal relations between parents and program staff (Powell, 1988). It is also increasingly suggested that staff facilitate goals and activities which have been jointly determined by parents and staff, as opposed to staff being viewed as experts who know what is best for parents (Cochran, 1988). Given the aforementioned teacher beliefs in the inadequacies of the home environments and the families' needs for professional help with parenting, it would seem that the teachers in Middle County II viewed the parents with whom they worked as somewhat less than equals. This finding may have serious implications for Head Start and the whole concept of compensatory education and early intervention.

Although Head Start has emphasized the importance of parental control and participation, the very nature of a program designed to remedy identified deficits may preclude such involvement from happening. The key for Head Start may be "that some of the most effective programs in changing parental attitudes, behaviors, or lives are those which truly adhere to the Head Start tenets requiring that parents determine that types of programs and activities that are

most relevant to them and their children" (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1985, p. VI-45). Parent involvement programs must give parents the authority to control them, otherwise they may suggest to parents that they are incompetent.

Another related finding with policy implications is the maintenance of separate programming for poor or otherwise "disadvantaged" children, a situation I had not thought to question until completing this study. In Middle County II, pre-academics through group-oriented "skill drill" was emphasized to approximately the same extent as DAP was. Given that DAP is likely to be the standard in middle-to upper-class early childhood settings, qualitatively different kinds of programming may well be provided to children in "enrichment" type preschools than to children in "compensatory" programs such as Head Start.

Considering the implications of targeting certain, notably compensatory, programs to the poor, I contend, as others (for example Wrigley, 1989) have, that a universalistic conception of early childhood education is needed. Universalistic programs, those which are available to all, would tend to raise standards for those who have had the least in the past. One likely result would be the establishment of a consistent standard for preschool teacher education. The current situation, according to Wrigley and verified by my experiences, is that low-income teachers, typically with little formal education, work with poor children and middle-income teachers with more education work with middle- and upper-class children. In addition, if such sharp divisions between programs for the poor and those for the more advantaged were not in place, there would be a better chance of having socioeconomically diverse programs.

Probably the most serious ramification of a class-divided system of E.C.E. is the stigmatizing of programs for the poor and the attendant results. Families living in poverty have been assumed to be deficient and therefore in need of middle-class intervention. The result of such assumptions has been public opposition to many programs serving the poor, and, more relevantly to this study, the adoption by service providers of critical or disdainful views of the families they serve. Were programs to enroll more heterogeneous populations, the stigmatization and resultant assumption and attacks would be less likely to occur (Wrigley, 1989).

Future Directions

As noted earlier, I am still struggling with many of the issues raised by this study. My primary concern has been the issue of what "developmentally appropriate practice" really is and whether it is universally applicable. As I shared the first write-up of my study with others, I was forced to question my own "taken for granted" acceptance of DAP as the "best" practice for all early childhood settings. Following these conversations and more critical and careful reading (e.g., Delpit, l988 & Greenburg, l990), I began to think that perhaps we, as early educators, ought to reexamine the wide-spread (and by and large unquestioned) acceptance of DAP. I began to see that educators working with children who are not from the "mainstream" culture (i.e., white and middle- or upper-class) may feel the children need an educational experience that will help to prepare them better for public schooling which is based on middle-class values. These children may be perceived as needing a model of E.C.E. that helps them to "catch up" with their more advantaged peers, requiring a

deliberate effort to teach them the skills, concepts, and behaviors with which middle-class children come to school.

Can we say that it is inappropriate for programs serving children who are likely to be behind their more advantaged peers when they enter school to provide opportunities for a quick "review" of skills? If DAP is defined primarily from a middle-class perspective is it inherently discriminatory? Can we argue that the same kinds of learning situations are appropriate for all children regardless of their backgrounds? If teachers, and parents, are aware of children's backgrounds and future school situations, might they not be best able to determine what kind of programming is needed in their preschool setting to increase the children's chances for eventual success? And, given that a universalistic conception of child care is likely to remain just a concept for some time, is it fair to suggest that programming ought not to vary between sites that have variable populations, perhaps some in need of opportunities middle-class families take for granted? These questions and others related to early education and care will continue to plague educators as long as an inequitable economic and education system is in place in the United States.

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PERSONAL BACKGROUND, BIASES, AND KNOWLEDGE

As a researcher, one conducts a study from a certain orientation or viewpoint due to one's background and experiences. My personal background is that of a white female brought up in a middle-class area with mainstream values. Although my parents did not have a lot of money, they held very strong values regarding education and achievement so that I was exposed to most of the trappings of a middle-class life, i.e., "good" schools, church, sports, Girl Scouts, music and art, etc.

My formal education started in nursery school and continued through the twelfth grade in suburban public schools. I attended a large public university for my undergraduate degree then worked for several years before returning for my master's and then doctoral degrees.

Adult work experiences have been almost exclusively working with either preschoolers or present and future teachers of preschoolers. I have been a classroom teacher, a day care center director, and a teacher educator and supervisor.

My biases are probably those common to others of similar backgrounds regarding the importance of education, teacher roles, and what schools (including preschoolers) are for. Of special note is my bias toward Early Childhood philosophy and practice that reflect the values of the dominant culture, that is, prevailing theory (see NAEYC's position statement on developmentally appropriate practice) which supports child-initiated activities, the teacher as facilitator and supporter, hands-on, concrete and relevant activities for young children, and so on.

I have much knowledge of early childhood settings through my years of reading, teaching, directing a center, supervising, and observing. My knowledge of Head Start comes primarily from the nine months I spent as a Field Supervisor and Instructor working with Head Start teachers who were earning their Child Development Associate certification (CDAs). During that time, I taught three college courses in child development and early education, plus observed in the centers where all the teachers worked. The center upon which the study focuses became especially familiar to me as four of the teachers in the program worked at that site.

My theoretical and academic knowledge includes the areas of child development, Early Childhood Education, critical theory, the educational role of the family, teacher education, and educational ethnography.

Teachers' Life Histories

Lisa

I am the oldest child in a family of three children. My age is 26 years old, and I was born in Heidelberg, Germany. After my birth, my parents resided in a mid-sized town in Pennsylvania. I attended elementary school and junior high there and in 1974 my family moved to a more rural area. I graduated from high school in 1978. After I graduated from high school, I started to work at a clothing store, while also helping part-time at the day care center as an aide.

In 1980, I decided to pursue a career in Early Childhood. The program of Middle County Child Development decided to hire me as an aide, after working for them as a replacement for another staff member for a year. I started to work with the 3 to 4 year old class. I received a lot of experience from good qualified staff members.

I was encouraged to go back to school from family and staff members. So, in 1981, I enrolled in Adult Education classes, and received credits for all the human development courses I took.

In 1983, I was married. We have just bought a new home which I enjoy a lot. I take a lot of time to decorate it, and spend hours making flower arrangements for it, along with yard work. My husband and I enjoy friends, family, and doing work around the house. At this time, we have no children but do plan to have children in the future. Joseph works at a local factory near the day care center. Both our families are still close to us; we only live a few miles from each of our own parents. Our goal in life is to be happy, have friends, and love each other dearly.

My desire to obtain a C.D.A. credential is to better myself as a preschool caregiver, and in doing that, facilitate it to each child and staff member. I want to succeed to other areas of our program, especially the possibility of being group supervisor.

I believe that children are our future. We must teach them well and fill their childhood with love, safety, and education. We, as caregivers, must develop a program that facilitates developmental experiences, and a feeling of security and acceptance.

My desire to obtain a C.D.A. credential is full of hope, effort, failure, and determination. I hope to obtain this credential. I am putting forth a lot of hope, effort, failure, and determination and my heart is full of effort to attempt success with this credential.

Tami

I was born on January 3, 1953, the fifth of seven children. I was raised in a village outside of Milltown. Although my father had a good job, we didn't have much because my parents were alcoholics. The one thing my parents did give us was a lot of love which keeps the family close even today.

At the age of 17 I quit school to get married, and became a widow at the age of 18 as the result of a car accident. After my husband's death I found a lot of time on my hands and went to work as a waitress. Soon after than I met the man who became my second husband on July 21, 1973. With the birth of our son in 1980, I quit work to become a full-time mother.

As a result of my love for children, I started working more and more with them. Through my affiliation with my church, I became a Sunday School

teacher, youth group leader and a Christian education committee member. When my church started a summer program for the children of the community, I naturally volunteered to teach a class. Outside of church I became a Cub Scout Den mother.

It was my dealings with children that promoted me to attend classes to obtain my G.E.D. Soon after this, I started working as an assistant teacher for Head Start. My interests in children comes from watching them learn new and different things which I have helped teach them. Because the children have taught me important lessons about understanding, patience, and the needs of others, I hope to continue teaching them while they teach me.

Connie

I'm the second of three daughters. I had the unique experience of being raised with my working parents in our family's little general store in a local rural area. I spent the first eighteen years of my life there.

I married my high school sweetheart two weeks after we graduated. How proud I was to have become a wife!

My husband began working in a steel mill. He is still employed there. I was quite content to be at home with our three children. This period of my life was definitely the happiest, most fulfilled time I have yet experienced. The years between infancy to brownie meetings to junior high school flew by too quickly.

I suddenly found myself with a strange void feeling. The emptiness would not go away. After months of searching, I realized I had to be needed more than I was, as my children had developed their independence. I shared my crisis with a friend who happened to be an employee of Middle County Head Start. She convinced me to submit an application. The hours were perfect, I'd

be in school the same time my children were. I'd also have the same days off. Especially attractive to me was the fact that I'd be home all summer.

What disappointment as I was told my resume would be filed for future consideration! Again my friend came to my rescue and talked in my behalf to the coordinator. I was immediately reconsidered and hired as a bus driver. During my fifth year of employment, I was asked to fill in a temporary tutoring position for the students I was driving. Our special needs coordinator had observed me in the classroom and watched me interacting with children. She liked the tutoring traits she noticed and encouraged me to accept on-the-job training. The very next semester a full time tutor's job was available. I applied and am now hired as Middle County's new l989-90 tutor.

Questionnaire to Determine Teachers' Social Milieus

Please tell me about the following as completely as possible.

1. Who are the members of your household?
2. What jobs do the adults in your household have?
3. What is the level of education of all adults in your household? (Less than eighth grade: high school diploma or GED: some college: a two-year degree: a four-year degree: graduate credits).
4. What is the level of education of your nearest neighbors (if known)?
5. What jobs do your nearest neighbors hold?
6. What is or was the education level of your parents? What jobs did they hold?
7. How many children live in your home and what are their ages?